

REMARKS

I. Status and Disposition of the Claims

Claims 20-76 are pending in this application. Claims 27-44, 46 and 47 are withdrawn from consideration by the Examiner. Applicants respectfully acknowledge that claims 20-26, 45, 48-54, and 69-76 are allowed. However, claims 55-57, 59, 66, and 67 are rejected, and claims 58, 60-65, and 68 are objected to.

Without prejudice or disclaimer, claim 55 has been amended to incorporate the limitation of claim 60, and now specifies that the acidifying agents are chosen from mineral and organic acidifying agents. Support for this amendment can be found in the specification and claims as filed, for example claim 60. As a result of this amendment, claim 60 has been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Accordingly, no new matter has been added.

As an initial matter, Applicants acknowledge the Examiner's maintenance of the applied Election of Species. Final Office Action at 2. Regardless, Applicants continue to traverse the Restriction Requirement as applied in this application for the reasons of record, which are specifically incorporated herein by reference. Further, Applicants once again remind the Examiner of his duty to expand his search to a "reasonable number of species," as provided in M.P.E.P. §808.02 and 35 U.S.C. §121.

II. Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

The Examiner maintains the rejection of claims 55-57, 59, 66, and 67 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,160,037 ("Leugs") for the reasons disclosed in the Office Action mailed March 23, 2006. Final Office Action at 2. Claims 58, 60-65 and 68 are objected to by the Examiner as

dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if re-written in independent form. *Id.*

Applicants respectfully disagree and traverse for the reasons of record. However, in the interest of advancing prosecution, Applicants have amended claim 55 to include the limitation of allowable claim 60. Accordingly, this rejection is now moot.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration and reexamination of this application and the timely allowance of the pending claims.

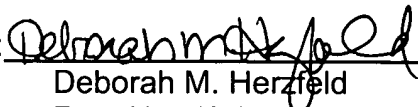
If the Examiner believes a telephone conference could be useful in resolving any of the outstanding issues, he is respectfully urged to contact Applicants' undersigned counsel at 202-408-4368.

Please grant any extensions of time required to enter this response and charge any additional required fees to our Deposit Account No. 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: February 27, 2007

By: 
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